



Resource Family Connection

News, Events, and Information Benefiting
the Children of Waukesha County
May and June, 2020
COVID-19 Edition



Waukesha County Foster Care and COVID-19

We would like to take this opportunity to update you on COVID-19 in Waukesha County and at Waukesha County Health and Human Services.

We would like to share our gratitude for each of you, especially during this unprecedented time. The children and youth you care for already experience much uncertainty and insatiability, making a time like now even more stressful. We want to sincerely thank you for being loving and consistent caregivers for children and youth. We know this is a very difficult and unsettling time for everyone.

Please utilize your licensing social worker for support and resources; they are available for support and to offer assistance. **At this time, the foster care and support services unit, as well as on-going units, are primarily working remotely.** We continue to have full access to our e-mail and phone, as well as essential work programs. We are modifying how we conduct home visits during the current health emergency. **Until further notice, we will primarily be conducting home visits "virtually."** There are special circumstances in which home visits will be conducted in-person; such as if a new child is placed into your home. Per DCF regulations, we are required to conduct Confirming Safe Environment (CSE) home visits shortly following placement.

All Waukesha County Foster Care sponsored events have been canceled until further notice. This includes Networking Night, Information Sessions, and Ongoing Trainings. During this time, we still would like to keep potential foster parents engaged. Please share with your networks that, although we are no conducting information sessions at this time, we are still mailing out application packets to those interested in fostering. We anticipate the need for foster parents will continue to increase as a result of COVID-19. Please share our information with your contacts and we will be sure to connect with them!

All Caregivers

With COVID-19 changing on a daily basis, we are communicating with our caregivers and foster parents with weekly emails. If you have not received any emails, please contact your Kinship Worker or Foster Care Licensing Worker with your email, so we can stay in touch.

Kinship Worker

♥ Elizabeth (Libby) Sinclair: esinclair@waukeshacounty.gov

Foster Care Licensing Workers

♥ Cassie BeLow: cbelow@waukeshacounty.gov
♥ Rhonda Klinger: rklinger@waukeshacounty.gov
♥ Hilary Smith: hsmith@waukeshacounty.gov
♥ Jen Mantei: jmantei@waukeshacounty.gov

Ways To Stay Connected For Foster Parents

Facebook Group Name

- ♥ [Waukesha Foster Parent Community \(COVID-19\)](#)
- ♥ [Waukesha County Fostering Connections](#) (private foster parent group)

Facebook

- ♥ [WaukeshaCountyFosterCare](#)

Instagram

- ♥ [@waukeshacountyfostercare](#)

Twitter

- ♥ [@waukeshacofc](#)

Ways to Stay Connected for Kinship Providers

Kinship Navigator

<http://dcf.wi.gov/kinship/navigator>

COVID-19 Resource Sites

- ♥ Local: <https://www.waukeshacounty.gov/COVID19>
- ♥ State: <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19/index.htm>
- ♥ Federal: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>
- ♥ International: <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>

COVID-19 Health Resources

Explanation of the Safer at Home Order, fact sheets about COVID-19, and up-to-date information about COVID-19.

- ♥ <https://wisconsinliteracy.org/resources/health-resources.html>



WE ARE A
COMMUNITY

6 Ways Parents Can Support Their Kids Through the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Outbreak

By: Mandy Rich, Digital Content Writer for UNICEF

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) brings with it feelings like anxiety, stress, and uncertainty - and they are felt especially strongly by children of all ages. Though all children deal with such emotions in different ways, if your child has been faced with school closures, cancelled events, or separation from friends, they are going to need to feel loved and supported now more than ever.

We spoke with expert adolescent psychologist, best-selling author, monthly *New York Times* columnist and mother of two, Dr. Lisa Damour, about how you can help create a sense of normalcy at home while navigating “the new (temporary) normal.”

1. Be Calm and Proactive

“Parents should have a calm, proactive conversation with their children about the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), and the important role children can play in keeping themselves healthy. Let them know that it is possible that [you or your children] might start to feel symptoms at some point, which are often very similar to the common cold or flu, and that they do not need to feel unduly frightened of this possibility,” recommends Dr. Damour. “Parents should encourage their kids to let them know if they’re not feeling well, or if they are feeling worried about the virus so that the parents can be of help.”

“Adults can empathize with the fact that children are feeling understandably nervous and worried about COVID-19. Reassure your children that illness due to COVID-19 infection is generally mild, especially for children and young adults,” she says. It’s also important to remember, that many of the symptoms of COVID-19 can be treated. “From there, we can remind them that there are many effective things we can do to keep ourselves and others safe and to feel in better control of our circumstances: frequently wash our hands, don’t touch our faces, and engage in social distancing.”

“Another thing we can do is actually help them look onward. So to say to them, ‘Listen, I know you’re feeling really anxious about catching coronavirus, but part of why we’re asking you to do all these things - to wash your hands, to stay home - is that that’s also how we take care of members of our community. We think about the people around us, too.’”

2. Stick to a Routine

“Children need structure. Full stop. And what we’re all having to do, very quickly, is invent entirely new structures to get every one of us through our days,” says Dr. Damour. “I would strongly recommend that parents make sure that there’s a schedule for the day - that can include playtime where a kid can get on their phone and connect with their friends, but it also should have technology-free time and time set aside to help around the house. We need to think about what we value and we need to build a structure that reflects that. It will be a great relief to our kids to have a sense of a predictable day and a sense of when they’re supposed to be working and when they get to play.”

She suggests getting your children involved too. “For children 10 and 11 or older, I would ask the child to design it. Give them a sense of the kinds of things that should be included in their day, and then work with what they create.” When it comes to younger children, “depending on who is supervising them (I realize that not every parent is going to be home to do this) structure their day so that all of the things that need to get done before anything else happen: all of their schoolwork and all of their chores. For some families, doing that at the start of the day will work best for kids. Other families may find it may work okay to start the day a little bit later after sleeping in and enjoying breakfast together as a family.” For parents who are not able to supervise their children during the day, explore your caretaker ways to create a structure that works best.

3. Let Your Child Feel Their Emotions

With school closures come cancelled school plays, concerts, sports matches, and activities that children are deeply disappointed about missing out on because of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19). Dr. Damour’s number one piece of advice is to let them be sad. “In the scope of an adolescent’s life these are major losses. This is bigger for them than it is for us because we’re measuring it against our lifetime and experience. Support, expect, and normalize that they are very sad and very frustrated about the losses they are mourning.” When in doubt, empathy and support are the way to go.

4. Check In With Them About What They’re Hearing

There is a lot of misinformation circulating about the coronavirus disease (COVID-19). “Find out what your child is hearing or what they think is true. It’s not enough to just tell your child accurate facts, but if they have picked up something that is inaccurate, if you don’t find out what they are thinking and directly address the misunderstanding, they may combine the new information you give them with the old information they have. Find out what your child already knows and start from there in terms of getting them on the right track.”

If they have questions you can’t answer, instead of guessing, use it as an opportunity to explore the answers together. Use websites of trusted organizations like UNICEF and the World Health Organization for sources of information.

Many children are facing bullying and abuse at school or online around the coronavirus disease (COVID-19). It’s important your children know that you’re always there for them should they experience bullying. “Activating bystanders is the best way to address any kind of bullying,” says Dr. Damour. “Kids who are targeted should not be expected to confront bullies; rather we should encourage them to turn to friends or adults for help and support.”

5. Create Welcome Distractions

When it comes to processing difficult emotions, “take your cues from your child, and really think a lot about balancing talking about feelings with finding distractions, and allow distractions when kids need relief from feeling very upset.” Have a family game night every few days or cook meals together. Dr. Damour is using dinner time to connect with her daughters. “We’ve decided that we are going to have a dinner team every night. We mix it up in pairs, so we rotate who is in charge of making dinner for the family.”

With teens and their screens, allow for some leeway, but not a free-for-all. Dr. Damour advises to be up front with your teenager and say that you understand they have more time on their hands, but that it’s not going to be a good idea to have unfettered access to screens or social media. “Ask your teen, ‘how should we handle this? Come up with a structure and show me the structure that you’re thinking about, and then I’ll let you know what I think.’”

6. Monitor Your Own Behavior

“Parents, of course, are anxious too, and our kids will take emotional cues from us,” explains Dr. Damour. “I would ask parents to do what they can to manage their anxiety in their own time and to not overshare their fears with their children. That may mean containing emotions, which may be hard at times, especially if they’re feeling those emotions pretty intensely.”

Children rely on their parents to provide a sense of safety and security. “[It’s important that] we remember that they are the passengers in this, and we are driving the car. And so even if we’re feeling anxious, we can’t let that get in the way of them feeling like safe passengers.”

Resource Guides

Children with Special Needs

Sensory Activities

- ♥ Sensory bottle: Use any kind of plastic bottle that won't spill (Gatorade bottles or regular water bottles work well)!. Use oil and water as a base. Then add fun items such as glitter, beads, pompon balls, etc. to make your bottle unique.
- ♥ Have a sensory table or bucket (like a shallow bin), and fill it with different items such as cotton balls, pipe cleaners, bubble wraps, etc.

Outdoor Play

- ♥ Working on motor skills: rolling a ball back and forth, playing catch, kicking a soccer ball, etc.
- ♥ Utilizing chalk for learning: Depending on your child's age, maybe they need to work on shapes, letters, or numbers. You can even have them draw something and explain their picture to you.
- ♥ Go on a walk in nature: Point out different animals, plants, etc. that you see.
- ♥ Quiet time: Read books together outdoors.

Indoor Play

- ♥ Yoga for kids: check out Yoga for Kids videos on YouTube or use your imagination.
- ♥ Music time: Dance party/wiggle breaks will be a huge help in your house! They are fun for kids, and will give you some time to have fun too!
- ♥ Sing rhyming songs such as Humpty Dumpty; Twinkle, Twinkle; Baa Baa Black Sheep; or Baby Beluga
- ♥ Play with blocks/Legos together
- ♥ Cook together: Don't be afraid to get messy!

Toddlers

Toy Rotation

If you have a variety of toys, try a toy rotation. Pick a few toys to leave out for your child to play with and put the rest away out of sight. After a week or so, switch out the toys they've been using for the ones stored away. It feels like they have new toys!

Outside Time

- ♥ While maintaining social distancing, you can run, roll down hills, jump like kangaroos, or lie back and look at the clouds.
- ♥ Enjoy bubbles.
- ♥ Listen to music and sing together.
- ♥ Play "I spy" (keep it simple like "I spy something blue!").
- ♥ Kick, rock, or toss a ball back and forth.
- ♥ Dig in the dirt.
- ♥ Play with sidewalk chalk.
- ♥ Most play that happens inside the house can also happen outside, so if the weather allows, bring some toys outside, read together outdoors, color, or paint in the yard.

Physical Play

- ♥ Turn on some music and have a dance party
- ♥ Put couch cushions on the floor and crawl, walk, or jump from one to the next (don't touch the floor! It's hot lava!).
- ♥ Build a fort with sheets, blankets, cushions, pillows, and more!
- ♥ Create an obstacle course using furniture, pillows, and toys.

Quiet Play

- ♥ Read together
- ♥ Color
- ♥ Puzzles

Elementary Students

Nonacademic Ideas

- ♥ Play dress-up with old Halloween costumes
- ♥ Board games
- ♥ Watch movies or TV shows (educational or fun)
- ♥ Act out scenes from the child's favorite movie or TV show
- ♥ Go through old clothes or toys to eventually donate.
- ♥ Help prepare meals.
- ♥ Play a puppet show with socks.

Academic Ideas

- ♥ Paint a picture and describe it.
- ♥ Practice writing the alphabet.
- ♥ Practice writing sentences.
- ♥ Work on addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division facts.
- ♥ Make slime to see how different materials work together. There are many websites online that offer various ways to create it.
- ♥ Practice state capitals.
- ♥ Practice spelling.

Middle School Students

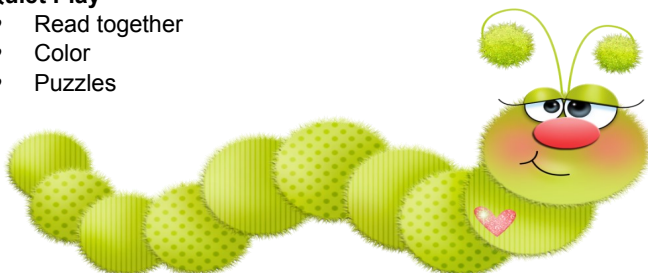
- ♥ Help make dinner. Can even create a new recipe!
- ♥ Help with yard work.
- ♥ Write a letter to a loved one.
- ♥ Create a new dance.
- ♥ Create your own game - rules, game board, pieces, etc.
- ♥ Start a journal.
- ♥ Learn a new language (Check out the DuoLingo app).
- ♥ Create a vision board
- ♥ Practice or learn a new instrument
- ♥ FaceTime with a friend from school or a family member

High School Students

- ♥ Bake bread or a sweet treat to share with your family.
- ♥ Explore different colleges/universities online.
- ♥ Take a walk around the neighborhood.
- ♥ Listen to a podcast.
- ♥ Practice yoga.
- ♥ Meditate.
- ♥ Help a younger sibling with their school work or teach them something new.
- ♥ Play a video game.
- ♥ Study for the ACT or SAT
- ♥ Watch a new show or movie on Netflix
- ♥ Get creative! Color a picture, paint, or do a new craft.

Teen and Young Adult Text Support

Lexi Sandoval, Youth Outreach Specialist from NAMI Waukesha, is providing support, education, and resources for any teen or young adult struggling. Teens and youth and text Lexi at 262-993-6903, Mondays and Thursdays, 11:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.



Online Resources



Educational

- ♥ **All Kids Network:** Free educational resources, worksheets, writing prompts, themed coloring pages, craft, and snack ideas for parents, teachers, and caregivers.
<https://www.allkidsnetwork.com>
- ♥ **Audible Books:** For as long as schools are closed, we are open. Kids everywhere can instantly stream an incredible collection of stories, including titles across six different languages, that will help them continue dreaming, learning, and just being kids. All stories are free to stream on your desktop, laptop, phone, or tablet.
<https://stories.audible.com/start-listen>
- ♥ **Clark Creative Education:** Engaging K-12 curriculum for math, science, social studies, and language arts. 1000 free pages of teaching resources and digital instructional materials.
<https://clarkcreativeeducation.com/freebies/>
- ♥ **Cool Math:** Free online math lessons, math games, and fun math activities. This site is used widely in classrooms.
<https://www.coolmath.com>
- ♥ **Educational Innovations:** Worksheets, discussion starters, newsletters, science experiments, science teaching videos.
<https://www.teachersource.com/category/here-for-you>
- ♥ **Hippo Campus:** Explore over 7000 free videos in 13 subject areas. You can create a free account and create customized playlists too.
<https://hippocampus.org>
- ♥ **History for Kids:** Free online history network. Games, worksheets, articles, and quizzes.
<https://www.historyforkids.net>
- ♥ **NASA:** Explore NASA's online activities, e-books, podcasts, and other content. NASA has made their entire collection of images, sounds, and video available and publicly searchable online. It's 140,000 photos and other resources available for you to see, or even download and use in any way you like.
<http://nasa.gov>
- ♥ **PBS:** PBS has an extensive list of content that parents, caregivers, PreK-12 teachers, and students can start using now to adapt to home learning. Some resources can be received through traditional TV and some through the internet. They are free, curriculum-based, and classroom-tested.
<https://pbswisconsin.org/article/family-resources-and-support-for-home-learning-from-pbs-wisconsin/>
- ♥ **Science Experiments Using Household Stuff:** These 63 science experiments for kids are super-easy and a lot of fun to boot, as kids are exposed to a wide variety of scientific concepts. A great way to spend quality time together as a family.
<https://mommypoppins.com/kids/50-easy-science-experiments-for-kids-fun-educational-activities-using-household-stuff>
- ♥ **We Are Teachers:** Children's authors doing online readings and activities, free podcasts, must-watch TED talks for kids and teens and so much more.
<https://www.weareteachers.com/category/teaching-strategies/>

Fun At-Home Activities

- ♥ **Activity Village:** We've pulled together some of our favorite activities into the bundles and for the next few weeks at least, we are making them free for everyone to download. Coloring pages, Easter activity packs, spring activity packs, and more!
<https://www.activityvillage.co.uk/school-closures>
- ♥ **Joy Sun Bear:** Learning about the world's diverse cultures through free stories, crafts, recipes, coloring and activity sheets, games, and more!
<https://joysunbear.com>
- ♥ **Keeper of the Cheerios:** A lot of crafts for children, articles, recipes, and DIY activities.
<https://www.thekeeperofthecheerios.com/>
- ♥ **National Geographic Kids:** Free brain boosters, quizzes, online games, puzzles, videos, and more!
<https://kids.nationalgeographic.com/>
- ♥ **San Diego Zoo:** Check in on your favorite animal friends by visiting our live-streaming animal cams, watch videos on our YouTube channels, discover new animals and wildlife facts on our websites, and share the fun with kids as they learn by using our free online curriculum guides and activities.
<https://zoo.sandiegozoo.org/were-here-together>
- ♥ **Scavenger Hunts:** A list of fun scavenger hunts that your children can do outside. Get a new scavenger hunt every day!
<https://primaryplayground.net/scavenger-hunts/>
- ♥ **Sesame Street:** Your friends on Sesame Street are here to support you and your family during the COVID-19 health crisis. This site provides content and resources you can use with your family to offer comfort and spark playful learning activities.
<https://www.sesamestreet.org/caring>
- ♥ **Virtual Field Trips:** Thanks to technology, it's now possible for kids to visit all kinds of places from the comfort of your own home. Here is a list of the best virtual field trips for you, so enjoy your "visit!"
<https://www.weareteachers.com/best-virtual-field-trips/>

"The key is in not spending time, but in investing it." - Stephen Covey

Outdoor Activities

- ♥ **Kid-Friendly Hikes:** These trails are all short than 1-mile long and provide a great introduction into the natural beauty of Wisconsin.
<https://www.onlyinyourstate.com/wisconsin/wi-1-mile-hikes-kids/>
- ♥ **State Parks:** Fresh air and being outside can have an amazing positive effect on your health. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources has waived state park and trail entrance fees.
<http://dnr.wi.gov>
- ♥ **Waukesha County Parks:** All Waukesha County parks are open to the public.
<https://www.waukeshacounty.gov/findapark/>

Contact Numbers:

Foster Care

Social Workers:

Waukesha County
Health & Human Services
262-548-7212

Michelle Lim, Foster Care
Supervisor
262-970-4761

Cassie BeLow 262-896-8574
Rhonda Klinger 262-548-7240
Jennifer Mantei 262-548-7250
Libby Sinclair 262-548-7277
Hilary Smith 262-548-7254

Case Management

Social Workers:

Angie Sadler, Ongoing Social Work
Supervisor
262-548-7272

Eric Calvino, Ongoing Social Work
Supervisor
262-548-7271

Eve Altizer, Ongoing Social Work
Supervisor
262-548-7267

Nicole Allende 262-548-7265
Wyatt Caldwell 262-896-8281
Kimberly Dudzik 262-548-7347
Stephanie Engle 262-548-7424
Megan Fishler 262-896-8570
Abbey Girman 262-548-7695
Sharon Godwin 262-548-7684
Laura Jahnke 262-548-7359
Alyssa Jones 262-548-7239
Jessica Larsen 262-548-7346
Maria Maurer 262-548-7345
Rachel O'Sullivan 262-548-7639
Johanna Ploeger 262-896-6857
Elizabeth Russo 262-548-7349
Kim Sampson 262-548-7273
Linda Senger 262-548-7698
Brittany Sutton 262-548-7262
Jamie West 262-548-7264

Children's Mental Health
Outreach
262-548-7666

Medical Emergency: 911

Family Emergency: 211 or
262-547-3388

If an Allegation of Abuse or
Neglect has been made against
you, please call:

FASPP
Norma Schoenberg
920-922-9627